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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR NEA/IPA, CA/OCS/ACS/NESA

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SUBJECT: SNAPSHOT OF A WEST BANK AMCIT SETTLER

11. (SBU) On 12 Jan 2004 Conoff spoke with an American citizen resident of the West Bank settlement Neve Tsuf, also known as Halamish. The applicant was making an inquiry regarding the report of birth of her American citizen child but was willing to discuss the broader subject of life in a West Bank settlement.

12. (SBU) The American citizen is a 36 year-old married woman with three children. She immigrated to Israel from the US when she was about 20 years old. She is a stay-at-home mother, but her husband, a graduate of the Technion Institute (an elite Israeli technical university), works in Tel Aviv. She says Neve Tsuf is a settlement of about 200 families. It is located approximately six miles north of Ramallah and six miles east of the Green Line. The small Arab village of An Nabi Salih is little over half a mile north of the settlement.

13. (SBU) As a resident of the West Bank she is technically within the consular district of the US Consulate in Jerusalem. However she said that she did not wish to travel through East Jerusalem streets "surrounded by Arabs" to get to the Consulate. She would go there only if accompanied by her husband, who is usually armed. When asked why, if she fears East Jerusalem, she is willing to live in a settlement in the heart of the West Bank, she said that she thinks of Neve Tsuf as a suburb of Tel Aviv. She feels secure at home and is comforted by the presence of Israeli soldiers in her settlement and on the roads. She does not feel that she is in any more danger in Neve Tsuf than she would be in Tel Aviv. (Comment: The Consulate General in Jerusalem, which cleared on this cable, observes that while many Jewish American residents of the West Bank and Jerusalem have fears about coming to the Consulate General, the majority still choose to come to the Consulate rather than go to the Embassy in Tel Aviv for service. End comment.)

14. (SBU) She considers herself religious and cited ideological reasons, not financial incentives, for moving to Neve Tsuf. She believes that the God-given land of Israel includes the West Bank. However, she also cites practical reasons for wanting to live in a settlement. She says that, whereas within Israel she would live in an apartment, in Neve Tsuf she has a house. The proximity of her settlement to Tel Aviv is another important factor. She also cited the closeness of community life in Neve Tsuf, where she says people help each other. (Comment: On 14 January 2005, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, English edition, reported that 4 percent of American immigrants to Israel in 2004 settled over the Green Line, according to Nefesh B'Nefesh, an organization which fosters the immigration of Americans to Israel. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, approximately 1,700 Americans immigrated to Israel in 2004, roughly the same number as in 2003. End comment.)

15. (SBU) She opposes the disengagement plan and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. She said that there are "21 Arab nations, and they don't need another one." In a tone more sheepish than strident, she said that the conflict in Israel and the territories is part of the biblical struggle between the Jews and the "sons of Ishmael." However, she said that she is not an "Arab hater." She stated that an Arab built her house. In her opinion, most Arabs would prefer to go back to the pre-intifada days, when they had employment opportunities in the settlements. Regarding Mahmoud Abbas (a.k.a. Abu Mazen), the recently elected president of the Palestinian National Authority, she said he does not "talk peace." She knows him as one of the founders of Fatah and does not believe he brings any greater prospect of peace.

KURTZER